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SUBJECT: UNCHARACTERISTIC VIOLENCE BREAKS OUT AFTER CURACAO ISLAND
PARLIAMENT APPROVES FINANCIAL SUPERVISION FROM THE NETHERLANDS

¶1. Limited violent incidents erupted in Curacao after the Island Parliament narrowly approved on June 26 a motion providing for temporary financial supervision from the Netherlands in exchange for debt relief. Island MP and Sovereign People (PS) party leader Helmin Wiels called for civil disobedience, and said during a parliamentary meeting "you can expect war in this country if you agree with financial supervision."

¶2. Opposition parties' supporters tried to disrupt the process by blocking streets, creating civil unrest and by organizing various rallies against the governing coalition. Some 50-75 followers of the opposition Patriotic Alliance (AP) coalition barricaded streets in downtown Willemstad, but police were able to clear the area. One arrest was made. The demonstrators vented their anger by hurling stones and other objects and damaging vehicles in areas frequently visited by European Dutch. An Antillean man, reportedly incorrectly thought to be Dutch, had to be hospitalized when his skull was fractured after being attacked later that evening.

¶3. GONA Justice Minister David Dick and members of the police management team announced that the police will immediately take action against the slightest provocation that may occur during subsequent demonstrations. Island Governor Lisa Dindial announced in a nationally-televised speech that violence and discrimination would not be tolerated. Various organizations, among them the council of churches, the employers' association, opposition parties MAN, Forsa Korsou, and the Democratic Party, also condemned the random acts of violence perpetrated against persons thought to be European Dutch.

¶4. The governing coalition parties are expected to move forward with the process that will eventually lead to dissolving the Netherlands Antilles and the creation of an autonomous Curacao within the Dutch Kingdom, expected in 2010-11. Local media reports indicate that the majority of Curacao residents disapprove of the opposition supporters' recent tactics, but these indicate the opposition's growing desperation as the constitutional change process continue.

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